

BY EMAIL ONLY:
strategic.transport@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

3rd January 2023

Dear Sir/Madam,

Consultation on Draft Parking Standards for New Developments SPD

Thank you for giving us the opportunity to comment on the above document. I have provided below some comments on behalf of Redrow Homes (South Midlands) Ltd in relation to the proposals within the document that are of relevance to our current and future land interests in Central Bedfordshire.

Parking Standards for Residential Developments

Cycle Parking

We have no objections to the requirement to provide a resident's cycle parking space for every bedroom, and indeed this is our standard practice on most of our developments. The visitor parking requirement can also be accommodated, providing (as the supporting text suggests), that it can be provided in the same form at the same location as the residents' parking. We would have concerns over any requirement for the visitor cycle parking at a rate of 1 per house to be provided within public spaces since this would be likely to result in a vast over-provision as it is not plausible that every house in a development would be receiving a visitor on bike at the same time. Unused cycle stands create unnecessary clutter in the public realm to the detriment of creating attractive open spaces and public areas.

The required space to park each bicycle at 2m x 1m is unnecessarily large, as illustrated by the diagram at Appendix 2 where two cycles are comfortably parked within this same dimension with width to spare. The standard should be amended to make it clear that two bicycles can be accommodated within these dimensions.

We do not feel it is reasonable and strongly oppose the proposal to exclude the use of sheds for the purposes of accommodating the cycle parking requirement, since they can be made to be secure and are a very typical form of cycle parking provision in domestic situations.

Parking Layout

The statement that 'soft landscaping adjacent to parking spaces is not permitted' should be qualified as in many cases this could be an entirely appropriate layout solution, providing the parking bay was wide enough.

We have set out some comments on the suggested layouts provided in the appendices below:

Appendix 21 – there is no need for the additional 1m between the driveways, since the 2.5m width would ordinarily be considered sufficient for bay parking and each driveway already accommodates an additional 1m for access with cycles or bins. Requiring more space than is needed for parking would both reduce the amount of landscaping that can be provided and lead to an inefficient use of land, ultimately requiring more land to be allocated for development in order to meet identified needs.

Appendix 26 – the free-standing electric vehicle charging points are located too far away from the parking space, and could make their use more challenging, e.g. if the cable isn't long enough to reach to the back or other side of the car, and is likely to increase the chances of someone tripping over the cable. Free standing charging units are generally around 200mm in depth and therefore the additional 1m margin to accommodate them is excessive and an inefficient use of land. It would also give rise to unnecessary additional areas of hardstanding in a development, which is both visually unattractive and set against the sustainability aims of providing the charging points in the first place.

Appendix 28 – we do not consider it necessary or reasonable to require all visitor spaces within communal parking areas to be laid out to disabled space dimensions. A proportion (e.g. 10%) of them could be laid out to these standards to ensure there is flexibility to accommodate future access requirements.

Car Parking

The quantitative parking standards appear reasonable for 1-3 bed properties but start becoming excessive for 4+ bedroom homes. The Introduction to the SPD emphasises the importance of sustainable travel and encouraging more active modes of transport above use of the private car and therefore the high levels of parking required is at odds with this objective. We would advocate the use of 0.5 increments so that, e.g. 2 x 4 bed properties would need to provide 5 spaces between them and 2 x 5 bedroom properties would need to provide 7. The guidance provided under Paragraph 4.5.2 is welcomed in order to ensure that green/landscaped areas are not given over to hard standing unnecessarily, but should also be applied for social housing where the whole parking and landscaped area would be transferred to the housing association who would then have control over any future layout changes that may be needed to accommodate the vehicle ownership of specific tenants at the time.

The standards outlined for residential developments in town centre locations are supported, but we see no reason why these should be restricted to developments of up to 15 dwellings, since the locations are considered sustainable enough to rely on reduced car ownership regardless of the size of the development.

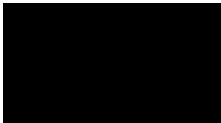
Summary

There are a number of aspects within the document that should in our view be reconsidered prior to the adoption of the document by the Council. It would not be appropriate to apply any weight to the document in decision making until it is formally adopted.

I would appreciate being kept informed of the progress of this document and any future consultations that may take place.

Yours sincerely,

For Redrow Homes Limited



Senior Planning Manager

Email: 